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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to analyze the learning benefits accrued by the experienced teacher from supervising a secondary social studies student teacher. Teachers in the Puget Sound region of the state of Washington were surveyed. They were asked to respond to questions to determine how well participating in the supervision of the student teachers had enhanced their professional development. Thirty nine of the 53 teachers surveyed returned the questionnaire for a return rate of 73%. Teaching experience of those participating averaged nearly 14 years. Results include the following. Only one of the competencies was determined to be significant in the professional development of the teacher as a result of the supervision. The teacher did learn to use "concepts and generalizations as organizing frameworks for planning and teaching social studies." The study then examines possible reasons why the supervising teachers did not accrue more benefits from the experience. First, it may be that the experienced teachers have a knowledge of teaching methodology that far surpasses what they might learn from the student teachers. For example, one of the respondents remarked, "I could have marked most of these items higher, but it was not the result of my contact with the student teacher that I employ those techniques." Another reason why the supervising teachers did not benefit more may be that the student teachers are not able to translate the skills they are learning into the public school educational process. Perhaps the student teachers are not given the opportunity to explain skills they are using, or they are not adept at demonstrating teaching competencies. Methods professors need to give attention to the competencies that the public school teacher reports have low influence on their professional development. (Author/RM)

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Perceived Benefits of the Social Studies Teacher From the Experience of supervising Social Studies Interns

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Perceived Benefits of the Social Studies Teacher From the Experience of Supervising Social Studies Interns

The focus of this study was to analyze the learning benefits accrued by the experienced teacher from supervising a secondary social studies intern (student teacher). Supervising secondary social studies interns is an important function of the experienced, competent teacher. The intern is usually the individual thought of as receiving the instruction in the teaching process. However, a question can be posed as to the learning benefits of such supervision to the experienced social studies teacher.[1] Teachers in the Puget Sound region of the State of Washington were surveyed to assess their perceptions of the benefits of the supervision process.

Program Organization

Secondary interns at the University of Washington are provided field experience in a public school for three quarters. These students begin with a six-hour-per-week placement during the first quarter, assume a half-time teaching schedule during the second quarter, and assume full-time teaching responsibilities during the third quarter. Throughout this teaching sequence, interns are also enrolled in on-campus course work.

Throughout the 1970s the University of Washington made a transition from the traditional one-quarter to three-quarters field experience program. During the first or second quarter of the field experience the interns usually enroll in the secondary social studies methods course. Instruction, conducted in twenty sessions, centers on the skill believed to

be necessary for beginning instruction in the contemporary social studies classroom.

Students are placed in the program after they have completed seventy percent of the academic major and have met the distribution requirements of the university. Selection is determined on the basis of grade point average, recommendations from public school teachers, university professors, and personal statements. Interns are provided courses in learning, evaluation, foundations of education, and a social studies methods course. If students make satisfactory progress during the first two quarters they are granted certification for the final quarter by the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction. This certificate provides the intern with a legal basis for instruction in the public classroom, either with or without supervision.

The field associate teachers are important to the University of Washington field experience for several reasons: first, field associates provide the day-to-day supervision of the intern, and continually monitor the interns in the classroom setting; second, they supervise the transition of interns from teaching or tutoring small groups to the teaching of large groups of students; third, they continually observe and evaluate interns as to their progress in teaching skills; fourth, they orient the student to school policies and procedures; the final, and perhaps the most difficult, task is to provide appropriate modeling of accepted teaching behavior. A high degree of commitment is demonstrated by the field associates because they have the responsibility for instruction in their classroom while also supervising an intern.[2]

The Study

The sample for this study was determined by identifying field associates who had supervised a secondary social studies intern during the period between autumn quarter 1978 and autumn quarter 1979. Seven school districts in which interns were placed agreed to participate in the study. The twenty items in the survey instrument were based on the specific educational tasks in the syllabus for the secondary social studies course. Teachers rated the enhancement of their professional development while participating in the supervision of social studies interns.

1. Becoming aware of the potential for social studies instruction.
2. Recognizing the forces that impact on the social studies teacher.
3. Defining the purpose of formal instruction.
4. Using the university curriculum library to identify textbook treatment of course content and reading level of texts.
5. Developing skill in writing learning objectives that are realistic for age, grade level, and maturity.
6. Learning to provide effective instruction with careful sequencing or integrating instructional events.
7. Identifying the concept of performance-based instruction in social studies with an ability to implement the instruction.
8. Using concepts and generalizations as organizing frameworks for planning and teaching social studies.
9. Using appropriate strategies for teaching various types of social studies aspects:
   a. informational learning

b. concepts and generalizations

c. skills

d. attitudes

10. Construction lessons that provide for forming and testing hypothesis.
11. Microteaching a social studies lesson to peers.
12. Identifying and teaching of various inquiry skills.
13. Identifying and teaching reading skills essential to social studies.
14. Identifying and teaching reading skills essential to social studies.
15. Using appropriate activities for bilingual education in the social studies.
16. Clarifying values by way of a controversial issue.
17. Establishing premises for evaluating student performance.
18. Constructing and using tests.
19. Using self-assessment of instruction as a part of being a professional.
20. Conduct social studies instruction in groups of varying sizes.

Using these objectives, twenty questions were developed to determine how well participating in the supervision of social studies interns enhanced their professional development. Fifty-three teachers who had supervised an intern during the previous year were asked to complete the questionnaire. Thirty-nine teachers returned the questionnaire representing 73 percent of those mailed. Seventy-two percent were high school teachers and 28 percent were junior high school teachers. Their teaching experience averaged nearly fourteen years. Sixty-nine percent were women, while men comprised 28 percent of the study. Ten percent received their degrees since 1970, 47 percent between 1960 and 1969, and 37 percent prior to 1960. These figures indicate that the questionnaire was returned by an

experienced group of secondary social studies teachers. Field associates were asked to indicate on a four-point scale the degree to which each of the twenty competencies contributed to their professional development. The response matrix appeared in the following manner:

TWENTY ITEMS STRESSED IN SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES	EXTENT OF IMPACT			
	VERY MUCH	MODER-ATELY	VERY LITTLE	NOT AT ALL

The teacher may have acquired benefit from the intern in a variety of ways including: discussion of teaching techniques used in the methods class; from materials that the intern brought to the teaching experience; from demonstrations of appropriate teaching techniques; or from discussions with the intern, methods professor, administrator, or with any other contact they might have had with the field experience program.[3]

Analysis of Data

A Chi-Square test was performed on the data obtained for each question with $p < .05$ being required to assume the questions were answsered by other than chance.

One question, among the twenty objectives surveyed, proved to be significant. The objective, "using concepts and generalizations as organizing frameworks for planning and teaching social studies," was rated as significant in the professional development of secondary social studies teachers supervising University of Washington student teachers.

Responses to the questionnaire that was administrered to secondary social studies field associate teachers indicate that some factors should be considered by the secondary social studies methods professor. Only one of the competencies was determined to be significant in the professional development of the field associate as a result of supervising a student teacher. There may be a number of reasons for this, and these may be items for further research.

First, it may be that the experienced teachers have a knowledge of teaching methodology that far surpasses what they might learn from the interns. For example, one of the respondents remarked,

> I could have marked most of these items in Part I higher, but it was not the result of my contact with the student-teachers [interns] that I employ those techniques.

Another stated:

> I learn very little from the interns, but find that experience really is the major consideration with good field associates who give 100% help and effort and do not just turn them loose.

Another social studies teacher pointed out:

> The one problem with this questionnaire is that everything is geared toward "how much has the student teacher impacted my teaching style." The student teacher has not done that, but most of the 20 items I do use or incorporate. I do not want you to draw erroneous conclusions.

It appears that the secondary social studies teacher hitherto had incorporated appropriate social studies techniques and did not adapt them from

the secondary intern.

Second, the College of Education should examine the interns' ability to translate the skills they are learning into the public school educational process. As interns become more skillful in explaining or demonstrating skills, it could be hypothesized that the field associate will recognize the skills being taught in the methods class. It may be that the interns are either not given the opportunity to explain skills they are using, or they are not adept at demonstrating teaching competencies.

Apparently, attention of the methods professor needs to be given to the competencies that the public school teacher reports have low influence on their professional development. If the field experience is to contribute to the inservice and professional development of the experienced teacher, the intern will have to be able to translate the material for the benefit and understanding of the teacher, and the methods teacher will have to provide instruction in applied techniques that have value to the secondary social studies teacher.

Notes

1. Louis J. Rubin, Improving In-Service Education: Proposals and Procedures for Change (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), p. 270.

2. Norma Dimmitt, Evaluation of Teaching Performance During the Field Experience Practicum (Seattle: University of Washington, 1973).

3. Clifford D. Foster, Field-Oriented Teacher Education as a Vehicle for the Professional Development of Elementary School Social Studies Teachers (Washington, D.C., Social Education, 1979), pp. 374-377.